

[Hernon Kyle]

1

Federal Writers' Project

Frederick [?] Kaul — L. A. Rollins

Hastings, Nebraska.

Source:

Interview with Mr. Hernon Kyle,

Hastings, Nebraska.

"I was born at Edinburg, Indiana, which is located in Mitchell County. It was June 3, 1849. My ancestors were Pennsylvania Dutch. My father was a merchant. He wanted to make a fortune out west and [succeeded?] to [persuade fa?] [?] to outfit him for a long trip to to California. Father and 19 other men started with 2 [towns?] and wagons in May [1849?]. They first headed for St. Joe [Mo.?], [?] join a larger caravan. Dad, however, did not get to California. On the way he became a victim of the [cholorea?]. [When?] and [where?] he died we never found out. We got reliable reports, however stating that he died of the cholorea and that his property was divided among his friends, who accompanied him.

Shortly after father left, I was born. I attended the grade school in Edinburg and two years at [Hartville?] College, [Hartville?], Ind. I took a course in general education. [Wilber Wright?], father of the famous [Wright?] Brothers, was a professor at Hartville College at that time. In 1871 we [decided?] [decided?] to go out west. We drove a [moving?] wagon. When we got to Mitchell County, Kansas, I filed on an [80?] acre homestead. Later I accumulated a [160?] acre farm. I still own the 240 acres of land.

Library of Congress

There were few [people?] in Western Kansas at the time we arrived. But the people that were there soon got acquainted and were far more socialbe than people are now days. Often we would get together and talk about our past lives and the news as it came into our settlement form mouth to mouth. Of course we or most of us played cards for pleasure.

None of us had money. The medium of exchange in [those?] first years was breaking the prairie and cleaning the land of stones. Such work was exchanged for food and clothing. Meat was plentiful. Buffalo, wild Turkey, Prairies Chicken, qual and rabbit meats gave us quite a varieity variety It was so cold that I froze my toes and ears. The day was Nov. 28th and the year 1871. Another time I went hunting to get a prairie chicken. I also [wennt?] [went] hunting for turkey. We got a turkey, a rabbit, a quail and a prairie chicken. Another time I went hunting for turkey. I shot and killed four with one shot. I put them into a sack and carried them home. They weighted around 100 lbs. I can well remember it. We settlers of Mitchell County often visited each other. We had many surprise parties in the neighborhood. We usually spent the evening playing cards, singing and dancing. Most of us also went to chruch.

One time during those early years a New Yorker came out to Cawker City, Kansas to shoot buffalo. John Mc Crary went out with hime him. Soon they came upon two buffalo, a cow and a bull. John shot the cow but the bull escaped. John told the Easterner to hid in the grass near the cow and await the return of the bull. He did so. Soon the bull appeared. Frightened the Easterner yelled, scaring the bull into a second flight. What Did you holler for said John to his associate. I became Freightened was the answer. They waited again. The bull returned. This time the New Yorker shot and wounded the animal. However the beast took after his attacker. Caught him between the horns and threw him hight into the air. Not being hurt John yelled, You were headed up, the right direction. They didn't you keep you going. You'd have gotten to Heaven. The New Yorker however had landed in a buffalo trail, having his life spared.

Library of Congress

One day a stranger traveling through the county by rail stopped at the Cawker City, Kansas depot. Hard wind was blowing. Turning to a local man asked: Does the wind always blow that way here. No, was the reply often it blows other ways.

Meteor fell on my place in 1872. Discovered by two boys. School teacher took axe and broke it up. 1 piece weighed 50 lbs. [Dro?] Chapman of [Magonia?] Spring Spring sent it to Yale or Harvard. [The?] largest piece at that time. I found a 10 piece and other pieces, Post Office has some at Cawker City, Kansas.